

In the Communication, the Examiner has noted that the Amendment filed on January 15, 2002 in response to the Office Action failed to address the secondary reference to Kulp et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,114,488 as cited by the Examiner. Specifically, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Okazaki et al. U.S. Patent No. 3,899,623 ("Okazaki") or Koyama et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,436,399 ("Koyama") in view of, *inter alia*, Kulp et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,114,488 ("Kulp"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Nowhere does Okazaki or Koyama disclose or suggest a method for coating a flexible substrate which comprises "rotationally casting to the substrate a coating comprising a polyurethane composition formed from (a) a substantially linear isocyanate-terminated polyurethane prepolymer; and, (b) a curative agent containing a diol having a molecular weight of less than about 250" as presently recited in Claim 1.

Rather, both Okazaki and Koyama disclose a polyurethane coating composition formed from an isocyanate-terminated prepolymer and a diol chain extender, e.g., 1,4-butane diol, for coating an impregnated sheet, e.g., synthetic leather. Nothing in Okazaki or Koyama remotely suggests any coating method for coating the polyurethane composition onto a flexible substrate, let alone the step of rotationally casting the polyurethane composition onto a flexible substrate. In fact, this is even acknowledged by the Examiner in the Office Action.

Kulp fails to cure the deficiencies of Okazaki and Koyama. Specifically, Kulp likewise fails to teach or suggest the step of rotationally casting the polyurethane coating

composition to a flexible substrate of Claim 1. Rather, Kulp discloses a rotational casting method for coating rigid substrates, e.g., roller cores, employing polyurethaneurea elastomer systems. Certainly no part of the Kulp disclosure would encourage or motivate one skilled in the art to rotationally cast a polyurethane coating onto a flexible substrate. Thus, nothing in Kulp would lead one skilled in the art to modify the rotational casting method for rigid substrates to arrive at the presently claimed step of rotationally casting a polyurethane composition to a flexible substrate.

Accordingly, since Okazaki or Koyama, alone or in combination with Kulp, do not teach or suggest the step of rotationally casting the polyurethane coating composition to a flexible substrate of Claim 1, amended Claims 1-16 are believed to be nonobvious, and therefore patent, over Okazaki, Koyama and Kulp, no matter how these references are considered or combined.

For the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that amended Claims 1-16 as presented herein are in condition for immediate allowance. Such early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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